

SCOTTSDALE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REPORT

To: Transportation Commission
Thru: Dave Meinhart, Transportation Planning and Transit
From: Madeline Clemann, Transit and Parking Manager
Meeting Date: May 21, 2009



ITEM IN BRIEF

Action: Public hearing to receive comments regarding proposed FY 2009-10 transit service changes.

Purpose: To provide information and receive comments on proposed transit service changes, including: elimination of all fixed route service on Routes 84 (Granite Reef) and 114 (Via Linda); elimination of the portion of Route 66 (Mill/68th Street) running between Loloma Station and Highland Avenue; reduction in frequency and evening hours of service for the Downtown Trolley; and reductions in frequency and hours of service on Saturdays for three north-south routes (Routes 66 – Mill/68th, 76 - Miller, and 81- Hayden/McClintock). The proposed budget also includes a reduction in staffing hours for the service counter at Loloma Station. If adopted by City Council as part of the FY 2009-10 budget, the proposed service changes will become effective July 1, 2009.

Background: In the second half of FY 2008-09, the City of Scottsdale realigned its budget to accommodate a 15 percent reduction in Transportation 0.2 percent privilege tax revenues used for the transit program. Privilege tax revenues were down even further (20 percent) in the first quarter of calendar 2009. Based on this trend, additional reductions have been recommended in order to balance the budget.

Key Considerations: A wide variety of cost saving measures were evaluated against the following key criteria: 1) impact the least number of riders possible; 2) improve efficiency and effectiveness by eliminating overlapping and/or less productive service first; 3) improve equity between the level of service for the City's two free circulators; and, 4) balance the FY 2009-10 transit budget. Table 1 below summarizes the proposed changes and their financial impact.

Table 1. Proposed Service Reductions and Cost Savings, FY 2009-10

Route (Corridor)	Change Proposed	Cost Savings	% of Transit Budget
66 (68 th St.)	Eliminate Fashion Square loop	\$ 370,000	5%
84 (Granite Reef)	Eliminate route	\$ 243,000	3%
114 (Via Linda)	Eliminate route	\$ 360,000	4%
Downtown Trolley	Increase route headway (reduce service frequency) from 10 minutes to 20 minutes	\$ 500,000	6%
All North & South Routes	Modify Saturday service to match Sunday schedule	\$ 44,000	<1%
Reduce Loloma Station Hours	Reduce contract employee hours by reducing station hours	\$ 36,000	< 1%
Total	All Service Changes	\$1,552,000	19%

Summary of Proposed Fixed Route Service Changes

Route 66. This route travels along 68th Street from Tempe, connecting the two cities. Activity centers served include: Cross Cut Canal, Papago Park, residential, Loloma Station, 5th Ave. shops, and Scottsdale Fashion Square. At the most recent Scottsdale public hearing in October 2008 which proposed transit service changes, a citizen requested that staff examine the Route 66 for ridership productivity, particularly the portion north of Loloma Station (see attached Map A). In response, staff conducted passenger boarding counts at each stop along the route and confirmed that few riders continued beyond Loloma Station to Fashion Square (see Attachment 1). As a result, staff recommends eliminating service on the Route 66 north of Loloma Station. Riders that continue to downtown activity centers north of the station have the option to transfer to either the Route 72 – Scottsdale or the Downtown Trolley, depending on preference and time of day.

Routes 84 and 114. Routes 84 and 114 are Scottsdale's least productive fixed routes in terms of cost per passenger (\$13.15 and \$15.40 per passenger boarding respectively, in FY 2008) and population served. Ridership on Route 84 has decreased over the last two fiscal years and Route 114 has remained relatively flat with a slight decrease (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Boardings by Route, FY 2004 - 2008

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Route 84	35,748	55,965	54,926	21,987	25,491
Route 114	26,823	25,466	25,856	24,652	24,482

Saturday Service. In December 2008, the City of Phoenix reduced Saturday service levels on all east/west routes to match Sunday service levels. This change affected seven routes in Scottsdale (170, 154, 106, 50, 41, 29, and 17). The proposal to match Saturday service with Sunday service on most remaining north/south routes (66, 76, and 81) will make the system of local routes consistent for riders and reduce costs. (Route 72 remains unaffected.) Staff estimates the Saturday service change could affect an estimated 12,000 riders of the three routes; or 0.006 percent of the total 2.2 million Scottsdale riders.

Route 66: Northbound PM service ends 1.5 hours earlier (9:45 PM), and Southbound PM service ends 2 hours earlier (9:51 PM); results in loss of 5 trips.

Route 76: AM service begins 30 min. later (7:33 AM), PM service ends 3 hours earlier (7:10 PM); change from 30 min. to 60 min. service results in loss of 36 trips.

Route 81: Northbound PM service ends 1 hour earlier (10:10 PM), Southbound PM service ends 3 hours earlier (9:53 PM); results in loss of 6 trips.

Summary of Proposed Trolley Route Changes

Ridership on the Neighborhood Trolley, which started service in 2006, began to approach the same level of ridership as the Downtown Trolley in FY 2008 (see Table 3). The first ten months of FY 2009 indicate the Neighborhood Trolley ridership has now surpassed that of the Downtown Trolley (318,846 vs. 207,425 boardings respectively). Both services are free yet have differing service frequencies, 10 minute headways on the Downtown Trolley and 20 minute headways on the Neighborhood Trolley. Aligning

the service frequency on both routes would make transferring from one route to the other more consistent for riders from a schedule standpoint, and is more equitable from a service standpoint. A slight decrease in summer ridership on the Downtown Trolley is expected as a result of the service changes.

Table 3. Trolley Route Ridership Comparison, FY 2004 - 2008

	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007*	FY 2008
Downtown	54,504	75,527	106,135	164,084	170,568
Neighborhood	NA	NA	NA	96,723	140,776

Note: The Neighborhood Trolley Route began service in July 2006. The route mileage was increased by 50% April 2008.

Other Proposed Changes

Loloma Station. Staff has proposed reducing the hours at Loloma Station to reduce the number of contract employee hours. Currently the station is open Monday through Sunday between the hours of 7:00 AM to 5:15 PM. During that time a contract employee provides customers with route information and fare media sales (1.9 full time equivalent employees). Staff proposes to reduce the Loloma Station hours to Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM, and 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Customer service would be provided by 1 full time equivalent contract employee(s).

Public Outreach

To inform the public of the proposed changes and of the Transportation Commission upcoming public hearing, all bus stops along the three routes were posted with flyers, 156 Valley Metro buses were posted with car cards, and staff sent out a news release. The Arizona Republic published an article on April 24th, 2009, and will run a second article on Saturday May 16th.

Staff Contact: Madeline Clemann 480-312-2732, mclemann@scottsdaleaz.gov

Attachment 1: Map A. Route 66 Proposed Changes

Attachment 2: Chart A. Route 66 Ridership Characteristics (Aren't you just attaching

Attachment 3: Public Comment Summary as of May 13, 2009

Map A. Route 66 Proposed Changes

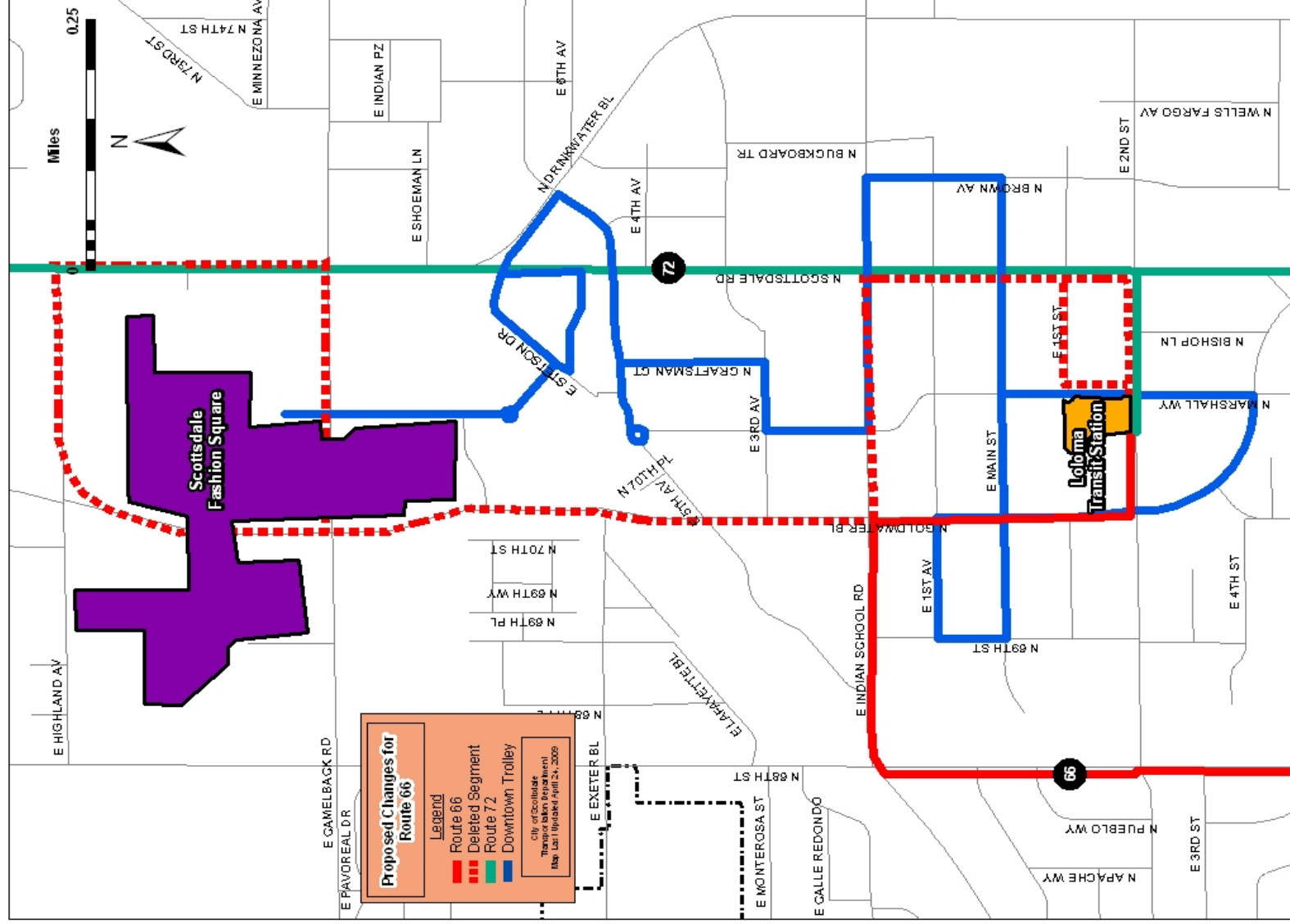
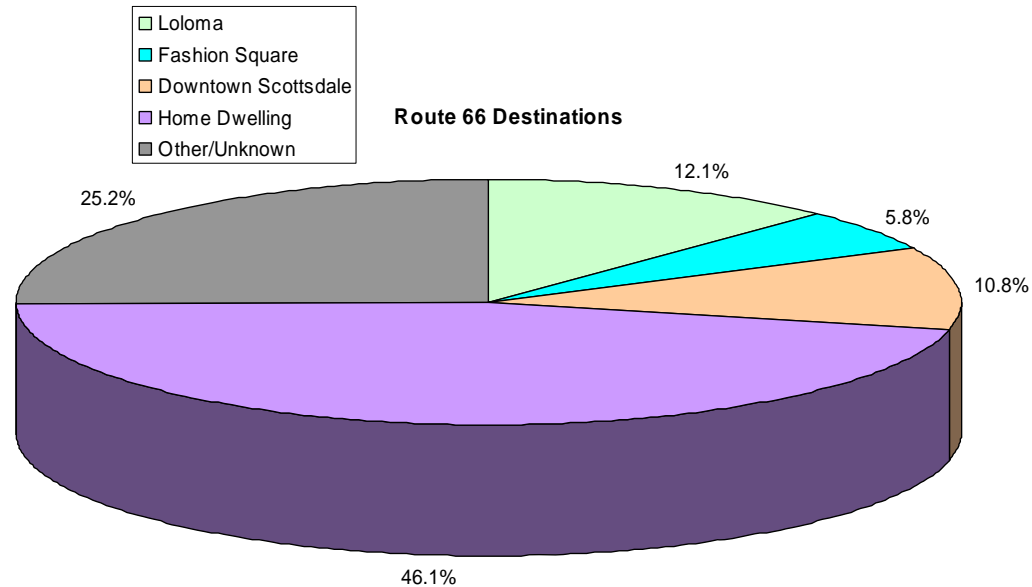


Chart A: Route 66 Ridership Characteristics

- Although Route 66 serves the Downtown Scottsdale area, including Scottsdale Fashion Square, the majority of Route 66 riders depart along 68th St to private residences.
- Only 16.6% of peak-hour riders use the route north of Loloma Transit Station towards Downtown Scottsdale and Scottsdale Fashion Square.
- Average daily *peak-hour ridership from COS counts in March 2009: 122 (Ridership counts reflect 10 hours of operation during peak hours: 5:42am-10:07am & 4:42pm-10:06pm)



Proposed Transit Service Changes
Summary of Public Comments Received
As of May 14, 2009 8:00 AM

Comments received in opposition to transit changes in general:

1. Resident opposes all transit changes, a travesty. Does not drive, relies on bus system. Cut other things that people don't need. Cut things that are not needed. The bus system is needed.
2. Email from Resident
Dear City of Scottsdale Transportation Department:
I have idea for the City of Scottsdale Transit System.
I hear on the Arizona Republic Online that Scottsdale is planning to eliminate Route 84 Granite Reef Road, would be eliminated and Route 114- Via Linda.
We need to extend Route 41- Indian School from Hayden Road to Scottsdale/SCC to cover the loss of Route 84 and add weekend trips on Route 50- Camelback including Saturday/Sunday to Scottsdale/SCC.
Extend short trips on Route 50- Camelback from 44th Street to Scottsdale Fashion Square to serve the loop going around the mall. This is currently serving by Route 66- 68th Street/Mill.

Comments received in opposition to the elimination of Route 114:

1. Resident, Lives at FLW and Via Linda, uses the Route 114 to get to work, opposed to eliminating the route.
2. Non resident, lives in Chandler and rides the 511 and transfers to the 114 to go to Desert Mountain where he teaches.
3. Resident, lives in the area and has no car.
8. (4-8) An additional five (5) phone calls were received from Basis school parents voicing their opposition to the route being eliminated.
12. (9-12) An additional four (4) calls were received from residents voicing their opposition to the route being eliminated.
13. Email from School Director
Subject: Support to Keep Rte 114/Via Linda
Thank you for taking the time to read my message. In short, I am the Director of BASIS Scottsdale Middle School. Several of our students ride the bus and its schedule coincides with our start/end of the school day. It allows parents who may be under financial or work-related constraints to allow their child to receive an excellent education. Our hope is that you may be able to preserve this line to help more students attend the top-ranked school BASIS Scottsdale.
14. Email from Basis School PTO
Subject: Metro Valley Bus Route 114
Hello. I am writing to try and obtain any pertinent information on bus Route 114. I have heard through the grapevine that this route might be cut next year, and we have many students at BASIS Scottsdale charter school who rely on this bus service. I know there are a number of DMHS students and other people who work in this area who need this service. It would be hugely detrimental to many families who struggle to get their children to school, if they lost this route. Please let me know

what is the status, and to whom I should write or call to make sure that our voices are heard regarding this matter.

15. Email from Resident

Subject: Proposal to Eliminate Transit Route 114
Honorable Mayor, City Council, and Transportation Commission:

On Monday, I was notified of the upcoming public hearing on a transportation plan that includes the possible elimination of bus service along Via Linda - Route 114. I have been using that service for about one year to commute between my home and Mayo Clinic where I work four days a week. Mayo provides me a multi-year pass as part of their effort to promote alternative transportation and trip reduction. As I live a bit over a mile from Route 114, I utilize my bicycle for that segment and am thus able to reduce my trips by private conveyance to the infrequent times that I must make a midday outing not reachable by the private shuttle service provided by Mayo.

So, as you can see, bus Route 114 is a critical component in my daily commute. The hearing notification suggested that Route 106 was an alternative for many destinations currently served by Route 114. That would be the case if Route 114 were not limited to only two trips in the morning and two trips in the evening to and from Mayo Clinic. I can get to work at the same approximate time in the mornings, but would have to stay later in the evening to catch the first West-bound trip.

I realize that ridership is low compared to other routes I have taken – I rode the busses for nine years when I worked at St. Joseph's Hospital. However, a quick survey this morning of the passengers on the bus I catch at 7:45 a.m., revealed those riders had no alternative. Students and staff at Desert Mountain High School cannot use Route 106, nor can the school teacher who works at the charter school at 136th and Via Linda. Likewise the construction worker employed at the site of the new retirement village at FLW and Via Linda cannot use Route 106, as cannot the domestic workers employed in private homes along Via Linda. The Research Scientist from Mayo has no alternative – she uses Route 114 to commute to work, do her grocery shopping, and to go to the McDowell Mountain Park trailheads for recreation. Additionally, Route 106 does not travel East of 90th Street on weekends.

I urge the transportation planners of the City of Scottsdale to reconsider eliminating the service provided by Route 114. Please explore alternatives such as reduced frequency in off-commute hours, smaller efficient vehicles, and even restructuring existing Routes 114 and 106 to provide a compromise most riders can work with.

16. Email from Resident

Subject: Valley Metro Bus Route 114
Councilman Ecton,

I am writing to you concerning the potential cancellation of Valley Metro's 114 bus route due to budget cuts. I currently have a 6th grader attending BASIS Scottsdale and riding this bus route to and from school on a daily basis. Next year I will have two children riding this bus, provided that it is not cancelled.

My husband and I are both engineers and split our parenting duties by one dropping off kids in the morning and one picking up in the afternoon. The 114 bus route has been a major time saver for us, as well as an environmental plus. We calculate 30 miles of driving that we save each and every school day. In addition to my children, there are at least a dozen or so more students that ride this bus route and also a few teachers.

I would urge you to do everything you can to save this bus route from cancellation. Possibly a reduced frequency can be worked out? 2-3 routes before school and 2-3 routes after school? Please consider alternatives before cancelling Route 114. Thank You

17. Email from Resident

Subject: Metro Bus 114 VOTE TO KEEP!!!!

Please vote to keep the Valley Metro Bus line 114 that serves Via Linda alive!!! It serves TWO hospitals, the Mayo Clinic and Scottsdale Healthcare, THREE schools and TWO public libraries!!! The Shea route 106 is not an alternative for a significant part of this route AND it has very limited service to the east end that reaches 136th St and Mayo Clinic.

PLEASE KEEP ROUTE 114 RUNNING!!! Many kids from the premier national award-winning school, Basis Scottsdale, depend on this bus route!! The city has shown past support for Basis for it has been recognized on top lists such as Best High Schools in the Nation by Newsweek, placing in the top three!

Route 114 is a busy bus in the morning hours and afternoon hours when the kids utilize it. Is there a way to cut out some of the afternoon hours to help with the budget cuts while still serving the higher peak times of mornings (7:30 - 9:30) and afternoons (3 - 5:00) as an alternative to totally cutting the route? I understand the need to meet new tight budgets, but the Route 114 bus is very important to many kids who do not have other transportation alternatives. Thank you for taking this concern under your wing and helping us keep valuable services such as this alive in Scottsdale.

18. Email from Resident

Subject: bus changes

this is a joke that this is up for consideration. without the 114 route, where I pick it up on Frank Lloyd and Via Linda, I would have no way to get to work at Frank Lloyd Wright and Thompson Peak Pkwy. I don't know what I would do. There are people who ride it like the high school kids and senior citizens. Dont get rid of this route because I wouldn't be able to get to work.

19. Email from Resident

Subject: Bus Route 114 SAVE THE ROUTE

I have looked at the alternative bus that goes up Shea to Mayo and it ONLY makes it up as far as Mayo ONCE in the morning (arrives around 7:30AM) and ONCE in the evening (leaves Mayo around 5PM). These options are not sufficient and they also require the kids to walk to and from Mayo instead of the bus stopping outside of Basis.

Major HARDSHIP, WE RELY ON THIS BUS ROUTE

20. Email from Resident

Subject: Bus Route 114 Is VITAL to Parents

Please realize that Route 114 serves 2 major hospitals (Mayo and Scottsdale Healthcare), three schools (on Via Linda directly) and two public libraries! Shea bus route 106 is a POOR substitute for a large part of Via Linda, and it has very limited service to that eastern most area (to Mayo/Basis area) of only once or twice in the early morning and once or twice in the evening (5PM, which is late for school kids).

I rely on this route for my daughter who attends Basis Scottsdale to get home in the afternoons during the school session. What with work and juggling schedules, this has been a God send for our family. It is safe, reliable, transportation and we use it every single day. It would be a HUGE hardship to us if it was discontinued. It is a valuable service that would be a shame to loose it.